

# SPIRITUAL TELEGRAPH

DEVOTED TO THE ILLUSTRATION OF SPIRITUAL INTERCOURSE.

"THE AGITATION OF THOUGHT IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM."

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WHOLE NO. 190.

## The Principles of Nature.

### PROFESSOR ANDERSON AND SPIRITUALISM.

A letter from Mr. Anderson, dated "London, Royal Lyceum," published in the *London Morning Advertiser* of October 20, 1855, occupying two columns in length. This communication has since come to us in several of our European and Canadian exchanges, and other periodicals which our friends have kindly forwarded to our address. The publication of this letter has given to Mr. Anderson's remarkable statements a reply which, I trust, the conductors of the papers in which his letter has appeared, will see the propriety of inserting in their columns, in justice to (as it is estimated) some of the millions of intelligent Spiritualists in America, among whom are natives of every state, kingdom and nation on the globe, and by whom are represented every phase of thought in religion, morals and religion.

I will copy from Mr. Anderson's letter the avowments which appear in his reply. He says:

For the last four years "spirit-rapping" has engaged my special attention. It was a new era in America, when I landed there about twenty years ago. Regarded of every novelty, be it in physics or psychology, I hastened to inform myself of its true character and fundamental principles. The statements which first attracted my attention to it were, that it was a new era in America, when I landed there about twenty years ago. Regarded of every novelty, be it in physics or psychology, I hastened to inform myself of its true character and fundamental principles. The statements which first attracted my attention to it were, that it was a new era in America, when I landed there about twenty years ago. Regarded of every novelty, be it in physics or psychology, I hastened to inform myself of its true character and fundamental principles.

It was productive of a little moral mischief, and was a little injurious to the happiness of individuals to encourage them to believe they could hold intercourse with dear departed parents, brothers, sisters, wives, husbands and children, put it in the bill; to matter for its falsity if it pays well! Since he did not find out the secret, put it in the bill, and laugh to scorn holy communion between the bereaved and their loved ones, and compromise with money the injuries done to living beings through mourning and bereavement of things held sacred! But if the religion to which Mr. Anderson panders, can thus compromise between conscience and the pocket, modern Spiritualism can not. Spiritualism is not a thing to make a fortune out of. It is a solemn instance of hardening the heart, and awakens sympathy for suffering humanity.

It is not true, as Mr. Anderson alleges, that the Misses Fox, or any other medium for spiritual manifestation, "speedily acquired a fortune" by exhibiting their spiritual gifts.

The Misses Fox, and I believe all other mediums, have uniformly given their time to such honest investigators as were unable to pay, and they have regulated their charges for time spent with persons able to pay for it, by the necessities of their physical existence. To meet the demands for their services, they have traveled from place to place comparatively without purse or scrip, and in several instances when they did not receive enough to pay their expenses, the latter have been met by friends of the cause in New York; and now, after devoting seven years to the unfolding of these immortal truths to a desponding world, they have neither property nor money beyond what is requisite to supply their immediate necessities. Mr. Anderson was undoubtedly judicious in deciding that more money could be made in denying and ridiculing, than in defending the spiritual phenomena.

Mr. Anderson says he satisfied himself on the following points: First, that the rappings were mechanically produced; secondly, that they were impostors who produced them, and willfully asserted falsehoods as to the mode of their production; thirdly, that there were many persons of an imaginative turn of mind, and strongly nervous temperament, who really, and without wishing to deceive, believed in the new doctrine, simply because it was new, and had something mysterious about it; fourthly, that many of the phenomena were what psychologists term subjective; that is, that an excited brain made for itself its own raps, just as the feverish patient conjures up his own visions; and finally, that the effect of all this was to damage society—to pervert belief in all that ages have taught us to regard as holy, and the faith of our forefathers has been conserved.

Nothing can be more absurd than the idea that modern spiritual manifestations are inconsistent with, or that they contravene, the great truths shadowed forth in the more ancient phenomena recorded in the Bible. The modern manifestations now under consideration, and the similar ones of eighteen hundred or six thousand years ago, equally claim a spiritual origin. The truth of this claim is as evident in respect to the modern as to the ancient phenomena; and I think I may safely say that for every such phenomenon recorded in the Bible, or found in other ancient histories, I can cite a similar one which has occurred within the last seven years, and furnish as good—yes, better—evidence of its spiritual origin. Moreover, if such phenomena had any holy significance in ages past, that significance is equally apparent in the similar phenomena which we are witnessing.

The great truths involved in the manifestations of our day, and those of which the early Christians were the mediums, stand side by side, and must stand or fall together. Men to-day are as competent to discern and rightly comprehend the facts which do appear, as they were who witnessed similar facts eighteen hundred years ago; and every argument urged against the evidence of modern spiritual manifestations, or against the competency of persons to discern and comprehend them, applies with equal force against the spiritual manifestations recorded in the Bible; and if it can be shown, in the nature of the case, that human testimony respecting spiritual phenomena is not reliable in either case, "then is our preaching vain, and our faith is also vain."

And what, I ask, tends more to "derange society, or pervert belief in all that ages have taught us to regard as holy, and the faith of our forefathers has been conserved," than the course pursued by pseudo-Christians and philosophers, in utterly denying the existing and eternal possibility of those very facts upon which this "belief of ages," and "faith of our forefathers" is based?

But again: How in the nature of things can similar facts signify different things, even though they occur in different ages of the world? If an invisible power rolled away the stone which Joseph placed at the door of the sepulcher (which stone, doubtless, did not weigh more than eight hundred pounds), and if an invisible power raised in our presence ponderable objects weighing eight hundred pounds or more, as has repeatedly been done, and this power in both cases claims to be exerted by Spirits, and we, like those of eighteen hundred years ago, credit that claim, wherein, I ask, does our belief and that of former ages differ? And how, by our belief, do we "pervert the truth?" Again, if the doors of a prison were unlocked by spiritual agency, and an apostle was by the same agency liberated from confinement, eighteen hundred years ago; and if in my presence and the presence of others, doors have been opened and shut, locked and unlocked, and the keys passed to persons present, or

put into their pockets, by an agency which also claimed to be spiritual—how, I ask, in this case is the legitimate "faith of our forefathers perverted?" by our belief that that agency is what it claims to be?

It was necessary that the spiritual phenomena recorded in the Bible should be re-affirmed in this age; for we had no tangible evidences of their verity, and faith in them was fast dying out, and in many minds had already become extinct. Before these modern manifestations, the spiritual records of the Bible were to many a dead letter, having no living efficacy; and even with those who really credited the biblical history, it was comparatively impotent for good, because they could refer to no living demonstration of its verity. Hence, those persons knowing no evidence of immortality except such as were furnished in the Bible records, were obliged to turn away multitudes unconvinced, whom they anathematized as infidels, simply because they asked to be shown the "signs which should follow those who believe."

Modern Spiritualism goes down in its policy to the most determined scepticism; and in spite of its incredulity, demonstrates the spiritual presence of its relatives and friends, and carries conviction to his inmost soul, of a life beyond the grave. And in these tangible manifestations of Spirits to the senses of mortals, is to be found the secret of its potency whereby, within the last six years, it has raised millions of desponding souls to a lively faith in immortality, and in the great truths taught in the Scriptures. Instead, therefore, of perverting the "Holy Scriptures," it is the most potent demonstration of their truth the world ever knew. Tens of thousands begin to appreciate, and are now rejoicing in, the glorious truths which are presented to them through modern spiritual manifestations; and we have numerous letters from persons in distant parts of our continent declaring that should they be called all the wealth of Christendom, on condition that they should go back to the material plane which their minds occupied six or eight years ago, it would be no inducement whatsoever. Whereas they once persecuted the Christians and the Church, and ridiculed the Scriptures, they now appreciate Christianity, and the various means of propagating it in the world, and find great delight in the truths embodied in the sacred volume.

Mr. Anderson does great violence to truth in saying that, according to reliable statements which I saw before I left America, it was estimated that seven thousand five hundred persons were immured in the lunatic asylums of the United States, whose lunacy had wholly resulted from their belief in Spirit-rapping impostures. It was also stated that from the same cause three hundred and sixty had committed suicide.

Neither the statement that seven thousand five hundred persons have become lunatics, nor that three hundred and sixty persons have committed suicide in consequence of investigating, or believing, in modern spiritual manifestations, is reliable. Mr. Anderson, while in America, was the author of the most absurd and unreliable statements respecting Spiritualism, that I have ever heard. Common sense restrained him from making such reckless statements as the above until he was three thousand miles from the country where he says these things occurred. Will Mr. Anderson tell us where he saw such "reliable statements?" Were they in any public print? And if so, what one? I once saw a paragraph in the *New York Herald*, stating that there were seventy-five persons (I think that was the number) in the lunatic Asylum on Blackwell's Island, whose lunacy was attributed to Spiritualism. A day or two after I saw this paragraph, I visited said Asylum, and other members of a charitable institution, with the view of constructing a similar building, and I improved the opportunity to ask the physician of the Asylum, how many of the inmates were made lunatics through the influence of modern Spiritualism? He said there were none. I then called his attention to the paragraph referred to. He said he had seen it, and had sent a letter to the editors of that paper, denying the statement.

Possibly this was the statement which Mr. Anderson saw; and to make it more "reliable" for his present purpose, he added two naughts, making, instead of seventy-five, seven thousand five hundred. It will be observed that Mr. Anderson stated in *Metropolitan Hall* the last time but one that he performed in America, that there were five hundred and seventy-five persons in the lunatic Asylum, and seventeen had committed suicide. There seems to be a wide discrepancy between his last statements in America, and his first in Europe!

Speaking of his success in tracing the alleged spiritual phenomenon to mechanical agency, in proving that the mediums were dishonest, etc., Mr. A. says:

Having ascertained myself on all these points, I took my position; I determined to place my lance in rest, and have a tilt with Spiritualism, if the combatants would but enter the lists. They wished me to combat with them privately. I preferred that the tournament should be open and public. I chose *Metropolitan Hall*, New York, as the field of combat, and I threw down the gauntlet in the shape of the challenge which I have transcribed:

"CHALLENGE.—I challenge the whole Spirit-rapping League, from Maine to California, for five thousand dollars or ten thousand dollars, that not one of them can produce a knock on my table, or any other, in my presence, which I can account for by natural causes, consistent with the well understood laws of natural philosophy."—J. H. ANDERSON, Wizard of the North."

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Mr. Anderson did publish a challenge in the *New York Herald*, which was accepted by Mrs. Ann L. Brown, of the Fox family to whom reference has been made. The challenge did not read as Mr. A. publishes it in his London letter, but reads as I shall hereafter quote it. The challenge, being accepted by Mrs. Brown, I accompanied her and her sister,

Kate Fox, to Mr. Anderson's entertainment in *Metropolitan Hall*, on Friday evening May 27, 1855. As I appeared there in behalf of these ladies, my statements concerning the preceding night, might be suspected of partiality; therefore I will quote from a report made by one of the best public reporters in this city, and one of Mr. A.'s own countrymen and intimate friends, which report, signed by himself, was published in the papers at the time. The report says:

On this occasion, after exhibiting his course of rappings, Mr. Anderson addressed his audience, informing them that the hours ago—only two hours ago—a letter had been left for him at Mr. Jelliffe's, 270 Broadway, which he would read to them now, as it related to the challenge which he had given to the "Spirited Rappers from Maine to California" (Sensation.) He would read this letter, which was as follows:

PROFESSOR JOHN HENRY ANDERSON.—Sir: Having received of your willingness to enter into the spirit-rapping league, for testing and demonstrating the truth, or other manifestations termed rapping, on every day, at 107 Broadway, I send you this challenge, and offer of \$1000 for every rap on my table, which you will accept, and I will make the same public. I send you the question of time, I propose the following:—On Friday evening, May 27, 1855, at 8 o'clock, I will be at the hall, and will make the same public. I send you the question of time, I propose the following:—On Friday evening, May 27, 1855, at 8 o'clock, I will be at the hall, and will make the same public. I send you the question of time, I propose the following:—On Friday evening, May 27, 1855, at 8 o'clock, I will be at the hall, and will make the same public.

They would notice that it was early within the last 20 hours that he had received this letter. I read here, he said, to explain his delay, and I am glad that the letter, though late in the day, has been written: I have to inquire whether any person named in this letter is here this evening?

A gentleman sitting near the back of the hall, answered that he was J. H. Anderson, and that he was the author of the letter. Mr. Anderson. I have been fighting it up to this hour, and I am glad that it shall have no power on the mind. I will put it down as a humbug. (Applause.)

THE GENTLEMEN. You will allow me, I trust, to say that I appear ready to reply to any remarks that you may make on Mrs. Brown's letter. (Sensation.)

MR. ANDERSON. Come up here, sit on this platform, and we can see you. [The gentleman accordingly left his seat and went on the platform, where he was greeted with clapping of hands.]

THE GENTLEMEN. You have read Mrs. Brown's letter. She accepts your challenge. (Applause.) If you allow her, she will personally defend the theory and practices which you denounce. I shall read the challenge which you published in the *New York Herald*. The challenge was as follows:

A CHALLENGE.—"Having ascertained myself on all these points, I took my position; I determined to place my lance in rest, and have a tilt with Spiritualism, if the combatants would but enter the lists. They wished me to combat with them privately. I preferred that the tournament should be open and public. I chose Metropolitan Hall, New York, as the field of combat, and I threw down the gauntlet in the shape of the challenge which I have transcribed."

MR. ANDERSON. That is not exactly as I intended it (chuckle), but I accept it. (Applause.)

MR. ANDERSON. I appear here, with two mediums, to defend the claims which we set up. (Applause.) I do not want to make money out of you. (Applause.) I have refused money before. I will not accept it now. If any medium chooses to accept it, he may. Our only object is to discover and to show the truth. (Sensation, and cries of "Bravo!")

MR. ANDERSON. No, sir; I want to discover the truth. MR. ANDERSON. We do not come here to hurt you, or to deceive, but to defend the truth. You can not object to the proposal that a committee of seven conduct the investigation, chosen out of the company now present, and with power for yourself to select a majority of that committee.

MR. ANDERSON (with great emphasis). No, sir. (Laughter.) If you have a power of making particular manifestations, you must use it before the whole audience here, or not at all. (Applause.) I won't have any hole-and-corner work.

MR. ANDERSON. We want none. We do not want to do any thing in secret. You wish to discover how the rappings are done, and we do not want to deceive you, but to let you perceive whether they do or do not occur, without any invisible agency. (Cries of "That's fair.")

MR. ANDERSON. No; I do not see why six or seven persons, and some of them females, should decide on the question, whether the rappings are produced, and by what means. I want the whole audience to be a committee. (This declaration was received with loud approbation.)

MR. ANDERSON. I want to private or secret manifestation. (Applause.) We are willing to appear on the platform, but we claim that both sides shall be represented here. There probably are some who believe in Spiritual rappings, and many who do not. It is not fair that some of both classes should investigate this matter!

MR. ANDERSON. Where are the mediums? Have them up here. Let them rap away. There's my table. They must rap on that, or none. (Applause, laughter, and one of "Give them fair play.") The table, on a platform running down the center of the hall, was about twenty-five feet distant from the stage, on which Mr. Anderson wished the mediums to take their places and operate.

MR. ANDERSON. Yes; fair play is what I ask for. MR. ANDERSON (who had been speaking in a very loud and vehement tone, here turned to Mr. Partridge, saying, in a very subdued manner, "Give me the hall.") If you do have any communication with heaven, I wish to God that I could. (Laughter.) You can not have your communications. (Cries of "No, no.") I say, "Yes." Defy this until tomorrow evening, if you wish, and it will give your party more time. (Oh! oh!)

MR. ANDERSON. We have something else to do. MR. ANDERSON. I have my table here. Let your rappers rap on it. Put your medium here, and leave the table there, where it is, that every one may see there's no collusion. [We suspect that Mr. Anderson meant "collusion." I have no comment. (Cries of "Go on with the performance," and "and and.") We want Spirit-raps. If you can convince me that you have the power of going beyond the grave—(cries of "Give them the chance of proving it, and don't talk there all night.")

which I believe he published in the *Tribune* at the time. I have repeatedly witnessed, at my own house and other places, tables raised entirely from the floor and suspended in the air, when there was no physical contact; and this, too, in presence of diverse other credible witnesses who have publicly testified to the facts; and from careful examination, all who were present absolutely knew that there was not, as he says, "a skillful adjustment of levers, and cleverly arranged horse-hairs, or any physical cause whatever, to account for the phenomena."

Tables have, under like circumstances, been raised with persons sitting upon them, whose combined weight amounted to eight hundred or a thousand pounds. Strung instruments have been taken up, tuned, and carried around the room while being played upon by this invisible spiritual power. These things are occurring in various sections of our country; and oftentimes between the parties who witness them, and have publicly affirmed the facts, there has never been any acquaintance, and hence could not have been any collusion. Yet their narratives respecting these manifestations substantially agree. So also are writings produced in rooms, closets, trunks, and various places under lock and key, and under circumstances which render it impossible that any person in the earth-room could have produced them. These writings are usually, in themselves, evidences of the source from which they come, inasmuch as they are *fac similes* of the writings of the individual whose Spirit claims to execute them. They, moreover, often give narratives of incidents connected with the earth-lives of their purported writers, and often disclose facts which were known only to the particular person whose Spirit claims to be the author of the statement. Moreover, when conditions have been favorable, Spirits have appeared in physical forms, which have been tangible to our senses of touch, and also visible to the eye; and we have recognized them by the peculiar features and expressions which marked their individuality in the earth-form. In such cases we are no more liable to mistake the individual Spirit present, than we are our relatives and friends with whom we are equally well acquainted. These manifestations appear in thousands of private families in our country, many of whom enjoy daily or hourly communication with their Spirit-friends. This fact in itself renders the idea of imposture and deception ridiculous and absurd in the extreme. This is my reply, truly and indignantly and abundantly in the extreme. This is my reply, truly and indignantly and abundantly in the extreme.

His fifth avowment is: "That the effect of this was to damage society; to pervert belief in all that ages have taught us to regard as holy, and the faith of our forefathers has been conserved."

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MR. ANDERSON. I appear here, with two mediums, to defend the claims which we set up. (Applause.) I do not want to make money out of you. (Applause.) I have refused money before. I will not accept it now. If any medium chooses to accept it, he may. Our only object is to discover and to show the truth. (Sensation, and cries of "Bravo!")

MR. ANDERSON. No, sir; I want to discover the truth. MR. ANDERSON. We do not come here to hurt you, or to deceive, but to defend the truth. You can not object to the proposal that a committee of seven conduct the investigation, chosen out of the company now present, and with power for yourself to select a majority of that committee.

MR. ANDERSON (with great emphasis). No, sir. (Laughter.) If you have a power of making particular manifestations, you must use it before the whole audience here, or not at all. (Applause.) I won't have any hole-and-corner work.

MR. ANDERSON. We want none. We do not want to do any thing in secret. You wish to discover how the rappings are done, and we do not want to deceive you, but to let you perceive whether they do or do not occur, without any invisible agency. (Cries of "That's fair.")

MR. ANDERSON. No; I do not see why six or seven persons, and some of them females, should decide on the question, whether the rappings are produced, and by what means. I want the whole audience to be a committee. (This declaration was received with loud approbation.)

MR. ANDERSON. I want to private or secret manifestation. (Applause.) We are willing to appear on the platform, but we claim that both sides shall be represented here. There probably are some who believe in Spiritual rappings, and many who do not. It is not fair that some of both classes should investigate this matter!

MR. ANDERSON. Where are the mediums? Have them up here. Let them rap away. There's my table. They must rap on that, or none. (Applause, laughter, and one of "Give them fair play.") The table, on a platform running down the center of the hall, was about twenty-five feet distant from the stage, on which Mr. Anderson wished the mediums to take their places and operate.

MR. ANDERSON. Yes; fair play is what I ask for.

MR. ANDERSON (who had been speaking in a very loud and vehement tone, here turned to Mr. Partridge, saying, in a very subdued manner, "Give me the hall.") If you do have any communication with heaven, I wish to God that I could. (Laughter.) You can not have your communications. (Cries of "No, no.") I say, "Yes." Defy this until tomorrow evening, if you wish, and it will give your party more time. (Oh! oh!)

MR. ANDERSON. We have something else to do.

MR. ANDERSON. I have my table here. Let your rappers rap on it. Put your medium here, and leave the table there, where it is, that every one may see there's no collusion. [We suspect that Mr. Anderson meant "collusion." I have no comment. (Cries of "Go on with the performance," and "and and.") We want Spirit-raps. If you can convince me that you have the power of going beyond the grave—(cries of "Give them the chance of proving it, and don't talk there all night.")











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